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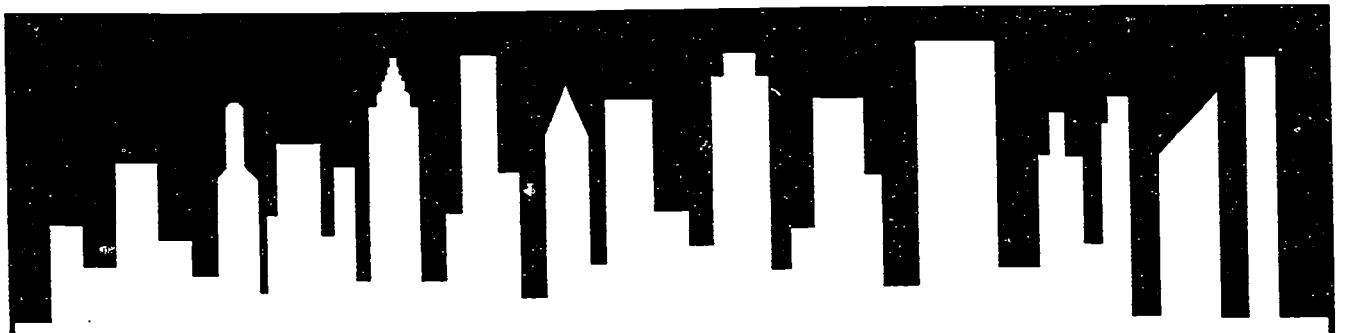
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ABSTRACT

The Blue Ribbon Commission on Diversity and Equity, appointed by the Superintendent of the Saint Paul (Minnesota) Public Schools, reviewed the policies and practices of the city's public schools, focusing on the low achievement of students of color. The Commission presented its report in May 1994, and this report is the Superintendent's response. A staff team was selected to review the Commission's report and to recommend action plans to the Superintendent. The actions described in this report are consistent with the strategic plan and HIGH-FIVE Goals to improve the achievement for all students in the Saint Paul Public Schools. The Superintendent reaffirms the importance of system-wide accountability as a major factor in the academic success of all students and recognizes the need for increased resources, support, and training; improved teaching methods; and expanded staff evaluations and peer assistance programs. Specific plans for improvement are offered in the following areas: (1) increased accountability; (2) building on successes; (3) increased collaboration; (4) high expectations for all students; (5) relevant curriculum; (6) increased effective teaching; (7) increased staff of color; (8) increased parent and community involvement; (9) improved climate; and (10) better compliance with the district's racial harassment policy. (Contains 10 tables.) (SLD)

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SUPERINTENDENT'S RESPONSE TO THE BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON DIVERSITY AND EQUITY

Curman L. Gaines
Superintendent
Saint Paul Public Schools
June 21, 1994

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SUPERINTENDENT'S RESPONSE TO THE BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON DIVERSITY AND EQUITY

Curman L. Gaines
Superintendent
Saint Paul Public Schools
June 21, 1994

Acknowledgment

The following staff members assisted in reviewing the Blue Ribbon Commission Report and recommending action plans to address the issues:

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A Message from Superintendent Curman L. Gaines

I want to publicly thank the Blue Ribbon Commission on Diversity and Equity for its work. Recognizing the very short timeline for the Commission to accomplish its task, I want to commend the members for the quality of their work.

The Saint Paul Public Schools are committed to high achievement for all students. I appointed this commission in response to individuals and groups from the communities of color who raised concerns to the superintendent and the board about the differentiated treatment and academic outcomes of students of color.

The common theme from all communities of color was the low academic achievement of students of color. In reviewing the district achievement data, we share their concerns of low achievement not only for students of color but also for low-income students. Therefore, I appointed a commission that included representation from the broader community to address these concerns.

The commission was not charged with the task of conducting a research-based study, nor did it have to prove discrimination. But rather the charge was to identify the issues related to academic performance and differentiated treatment of low-income students and students of color. Further, the charge was to develop strategies needed to remedy the issues identified along with a timeline for implementation to begin fall, 1994.

The Blue Ribbon Commission presented me with its report on May 6, 1994. On May 10, I selected the staff team identified in this report to review the Commission's report and to recommend action plans to me to address the issues. The actions described in this report are consistent with our Strategic Plan and our HIGH FIVE Goals to improve the achievement for all students in the Saint Paul Public Schools.

I firmly believe that we have the capacity to increase achievement for all students. We have caring and committed teachers, administrators, and support staff. Clearly, we need increased collaborations and involvement from all stakeholders in the education of the students in the Saint Paul Public Schools. We know what to do to achieve excellence for all students. The challenge before us is—Do we have the will and commitment to ensure success for all students?

With our limited resources, we must continue to look for creative ways to effectively teach our increasingly diverse population. As good as we are, we cannot do this alone. We need the cooperation, support, and involvement of students, parents, and the entire community to ensure high achievement for all students.

Thank you for your continued personal and collective support of the students of the Saint Paul Public Schools.

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Introduction

The Superintendent and staff have reviewed the Blue Ribbon Commission Report on Diversity and Equity and reaffirm the importance of system-wide accountability as a major factor in the academic success of **all** students.

We affirm the African proverb that "It takes an entire village to educate a child." While we acknowledge the responsibility all educators must share in this task, we firmly believe the vast majority of our staff remain strongly committed to helping all students succeed. We recognize the need for increased resources, increased support and training, improved teaching methods, expanded staff evaluation and expanded peer assistance programs. We also reaffirm the responsibilities that students, parents and the community must share to resolve these critical issues. Each of us must assume responsibility if a high level of learning is to occur for **all** students.

There is no place for prejudice, racism, elitism, discrimination or intolerance in our schools. There is need for systemic change which recognizes the unique needs and learning style of each student. Implementation of any systemic change requires effective training and a willingness to change. All of us—educators, parents, students and community—must commit ourselves to our unique roles in the educational village, and we all must be held accountable to achieve the needed change.

Increased Accountability

Areas of Concern	Actions	Accountability	Responsibility	Timeline	Cost
Principals/Administrators Evaluation	Principals/Administrators will participate in a formal evaluation process each year.	Teaching and Learning Planning and Support Services	PreK-12 Director Human Resources Director	September 1994	NAC*
	Orientation of probationary principals/administrators will be provided.	Teaching and Learning Planning and Support Services	Human Resources Director PreK-12 Director Employee Training Team Staff Development Team	September 1994	NAC
	Principals/Administrators will be required to attend the SDS Creating Racially Equitable Schools training.	Assistant Superintendents	PreK-12 Director	September 1994	NAC
Teacher Evaluation	All principals and assistant principals will be trained in clinical supervision and will continue to observe and evaluate probationary teachers following the Probationary Teacher Evaluation Procedure that has been adopted by the School Board.	Teaching and Learning Planning and Support Services	PreK-12 Director Employee Training Team Human Resources Director	September 1994	NAC
	When tenured teachers with problems are identified, the principal will use the current teacher evaluation system to assist the teacher in improving or exiting.	Teaching and Learning Planning and Support Services	Human Resources Director Principals	September 1994	NAC
	Convene a panel of teachers, students, parents, principals, other administrators and teacher union representatives to develop a process for formal tenured teacher evaluation.	Planning and Support Services	Principals Human Resources Director	September 1994	NAC
	Expand the current Peer Assistance and Review pilot program to include all schools.	Planning and Support Services	Human Resources Director	September 1994	TBD*

*NAC = No Added Cost
*TBD = To Be Determined

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Increased Accountability

Areas of Concern	Actions	Accountability	Responsibility	Timeline	Cost
Students' Academic Performance	Analyze and report standardized test results; e.g. MAT 7, disaggregated by school, racial/ethnic background, home language, and gender.	Planning and Support Services	Director Evaluation, Information and Student Services	By June 30 each year	NAC
	Analyze and report High School Competency Test results disaggregated by school, racial/ethnic background, home language and gender.	Planning and Support Services	Director Evaluation, Information and Student Services	By December 31 each year	NAC
	Analyze and report Chapter I change scores disaggregated by racial/ethnic background.	Planning and Support Services	Director Evaluation, Information and Student Services	By June 30 each year	NAC
	Analyze and report absence summaries disaggregated by school, racial/ethnic background and gender.	Planning and Support Services	Director Evaluation, Information and Student Services	Secondary Schools- by March 15 and August 15 each year Elementary Schools- by August 15 each year	NAC
	Report enrollment in advance mathematics, science and language arts classes disaggregated by school, racial/ethnic background and gender.	Planning and Support Services	Director Evaluation, Information and Student Services	By November 30 and March 31 each year	NAC
	Analyze and report dropout summaries disaggregated by school, racial/ethnic background and gender.	Planning and Support Services	Director Evaluation, Information and Student Services	By April 30 each year	NAC

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Building on Successes

Areas of Concern	Actions	Accountability	Responsibility	Timeline	Cost
Minority Encouragement Program (MEP)	Expand program to other high schools.	Teaching and Learning	PreK-12 Director	September 1994	TBD
"Who Are We" workshop	Expand program to increase availability to more staff.	Planning and Support Services	Employee Training Team Administrator of Integration Programs	December 1994	NAC
Project Advance	Develop an early recruitment program for Project Advance to encourage early student interest in teaching as a career choice.	Teaching and Learning	High School Counselors	September 1994-1997	TBD
Reading Recovery	Expand program to other schools.	Teaching and Learning	Supervisor-Chapter I Prog.	September 1994	TBD
Supporting Diversity in Schools (SDS)	Expand program to other schools.	Teaching and Learning	PreK-12 Director	January 1995	TBD
National Faculty Program (NFP)	Expand NFP to all middle/junior and senior high schools.	Teaching and Learning	PreK-12 Director	September 1994-1997	TBD

Increased Collaboration

Areas of Concern	Actions	Accountability	Responsibility	Timeline	Cost
Children's Initiative	Continue work with city and county to open pilot Family Resource Centers.	Superintendent	Assistant Superintendent Administration and Government Relations	September 1994-1995	TBD
Project KOFI	Increase collaborations with community agencies to provide more services to students.	Teaching and Learning	PreK-12 Director Building Principals	September 1994	TBD
Youth Works Program	Work jointly with city to create mentorships for youth through Youth Works.	Teaching and Learning	Director Community Education	September 1994	NAC
Public/Private Partnerships	Explore district-level partnerships with major corporations.	Superintendent	Administration and Government Relations	September 1994	TBD

High Expectations for All Students

Areas of Concern	Actions	Accountability	Responsibility	Timeline	Cost
Tracking/Homogeneous Grouping/Ability Grouping *We believe that tracking of students is harmful to all students, especially students of color, and to students of low socio-economic backgrounds.*	Recruit students of color for Gifted and Talented Programs, Capitol Hill, Ramsey, Quest, International Baccalaureate Program, etc.	Principals G/T Coordinator	Teachers Counselors	September 1994	NAC
	Whole group instruction should be practiced whenever possible with the use of cooperative learning strategies.	Teaching and Learning Principals	Teachers Employee Training Team	September 1994	NAC
	A city-wide effort is needed for high expectations for all students.	Principals	Teachers Support Staff	September 1994	NAC
Attendance *We believe that high attendance is critical to the success of students and teachers accomplishing the goal of high expectations.*	Attendance policy adopted by the Board of Education for K-12.	Superintendent Board of Education	Teaching and Learning Principals	September 1994	NAC
	Home/school liaisons hired for each secondary school, home/school liaison staff hired to monitor and enforce attendance at the elementary schools with the assistance of school social workers.	Teaching and Learning	Principals Teachers Home/School Liaisons	September 1994-pilot September 1995-full Implementation	TBD
	Educational plan developed to support the attendance policy.	Teaching and Learning	Principals Teachers Parents Students Support Staff	September 1995	NAC
	Require attendance specialists to make a personal contact with every student who leaves high school or ALC.	Teaching and Learning	Secondary Principals	Within 5 days of student's withdrawal or 15 consecutive absences	TBD

High Expectations for All Students

Areas of Concern	Actions	Accountability	Responsibility	Timeline	Cost
Expectations for High Student Achievement *All staff, parents, students and community members must be responsible for high expectations for all students.*	Teachers' Expectations Student Achievement training for all teachers K-12.	Teaching and Learning	Employee Training Team Administrator of Integration Programs	September 1994	NAC
	Modify teaching styles, provide time and resources to allow all students to succeed.	Teaching and Learning Planning and Support Services	Principals PreK-12 Director	September 1994	NAC
	Examine school day at each school to find and implement ways to increase time on task within the school day.	Teaching and Learning	Principals Teachers Support Staff	September 1994	TBD
	Explore ways of offering licensed staff paid time for extended day learning activities.	Teaching and Learning	Principals Teachers	September 1994	TBD
	Each school will develop a contract signed by teacher, student, parent/caregiver and a significant community member regarding attendance, academic performance, and behavior at school.	Teaching and Learning Planning and Support Services	Principals Teachers Parents and Students	September 1995	NAC
High Mobility *We believe that high student mobility leads to poor academic performance.*	A student mobility reduction zone will be reinstated for the schools with the highest percentage of mobile students at the elementary level. Students at these schools will stay in one school for the entire academic year.	Teaching and Learning Fiscal Affairs and Operations Planning and Support Services	Transportation Supervisor Principals Parents and Students	January 1995	TBD
	Secondary students will register in one middle school, junior high school or high school and remain in attendance for a full academic year.	Teaching and Learning Planning and Support Services	Principals Parents and Students	September 1995	NAC

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High Expectations for All Students

Areas of Concern	Actions	Accountability	Responsibility	Timeline	Cost
English as a Second Language (ESL)/Latino Consent Decree/ Bilingual	Entrance and exit criteria will be revised for the above programs in Saint Paul Schools K-12.	PreK-12 Director Advisory Council	Principals LEP Teacher Team LEP Teachers	September 1994	NAC
	Alternative service models will be explored to service our Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students.	PreK-12 Director	Principals ESL, Consent Decree Staff Bilingual Staff	September 1995	TBD

Relevant Curriculum

Areas of Concern	Actions	Accountability	Responsibility	Timeline	Cost
Multicultural Focus	Staff Development monies must be used for multicultural component.	Planning and Support Services Teaching and Learning	Employee Training Team Curriculum Development and Management Team	September 1994	NAC
	Provide cultural diversity workshops for all staff.	Planning and Support Services Teaching and Learning	Employee Training Team	September 1994	NAC
	Improved services through Multicultural Resource Center.	Teaching and Learning	Associate Director-Curriculum Development and Management	September 1994	NAC
	Update Multicultural Resource Center Materials.	Planning and Support Services Teaching and Learning	Employee Training Team Curriculum Development and Management Team	September 1994	TBD
Respect Student/Teachers	Initiate and maintain "Prejudice Isn't Welcome" program.	Teaching and Learning	PreK-12 Director Associate Director-Curriculum Development and Management	August 1, 1994	TBD
	Curriculum mandate for race/sex harassment.	Teaching and Learning	Associate Director-Curriculum Development and Management	September 1994	NAC
Clear Expectations for District Curriculum	Revise Learner Outcomes to format friendly to students/ teachers/parents/community.	Teaching and Learning	Associate Director-Curriculum Development and Management	1994-95 school year	NAC

Increased Effective Teaching

Areas of Concern	Actions	Accountability	Responsibility	Timeline	Cost
Teaching Tolerance for Students	Teacher Training on various learner styles.	Teaching and Learning	PreK-12 Director Principals Building Management Teams	September 1994	NAC
Respect for Student/Staff	Develop a process for student/staff conflict resolution team.	Teaching and Learning	PreK-12 Director Principals Teachers Parents and Students	September 1994	NAC
Helping Team	Redefine and expand role of teaching team to help teachers.	Teaching and Learning Planning and Support Services	PreK-12 Director Associate Director- Curriculum Development and Management Staff Development Supervisor	June 1995	TBD
	Re-establish Big Brother/Big Sister Program in building by creating a budget for substitutes to expand mentor teachers in classroom at the beginning to observe probationary teachers and make recommendations to hire retired master teachers/ administrators.	Teaching and Learning	PreK-12 Director Associate Director- Curriculum Development and Management Principals	September 1994	TBD

Increased Staff of Color

Areas of Concern	Actions	Accountability	Responsibility	Timeline	Cost
Recruitment and Development of Quality Teachers of Color	Continue aggressive program for the recruitment of quality teachers of color.	Planning and Support Services Teaching and Learning	Human Resources Director PreK-12 Director	June 1994	NAC
	Develop grant proposals to submit to foundations for funding teacher education for paraprofessionals.	Administration and Government Relations Teaching and Learning Planning and Support Services	Administrator Grant Office PreK-12 Director Human Resources Director	September 1994	NAC
	Access legislated funds dedicated to the development of teachers of color.	Planning and Support Services	Human Resources Director	June 1994	NAC
	Finalize the implementation of the Superintendent's administrative recruiting plan for LEP section of Teaching and Learning department.	Teaching and Learning	PreK-12 Director	June 1994	NAC
	Increase the number of interpreters at the school buildings.	Teaching and Learning	PreK-12 Director	September 1994	TBD
	Employ Community liaison for South East Asians who is Hmong speaking.	Superintendent	Administration and Government Relations	June 1994	NAC

Increased Parent/Community Involvement

Areas of Concern	Actions	Accountability	Responsibility	Timeline	Cost
Involvement of parents/ caregivers in the educational process of students	Use multiple means to reach all parents, especially hard-to-reach parents, through the use of telephone, letter, parent conferences and home visits at the beginning of the school year by home/school liaisons.	Teaching and Learning Planning and Support Services	Principals Executive Specialist Parent, Community, Volunteer Relations (PCVR)	September 1994	TBD
Welcome parents/caregivers and community to be a part of the school life and culture	Open buildings to parents and community; i.e., use the building during the evening.	Principals	Building Staff	September 1994	NAC
Respect of low-income parents and parents of color	Workshop for district office clerical and building staff.	Teaching and Learning Planning and Support Services	Principals Training Team PCVR Staff	September 1994	NAC
Building family-friendly schools	Each school will train staff in the art of customer service.	PreK-12 Director Planning and Support Services	Principals Training Team PCVR Staff	September 1994	NAC
Establish clear communication with parents/caregivers	Establish positive communication; provide interpreters, newsletters, progress reports, conferences, personal calls and letters by mail.	Principals	Teachers Support Staff	September 1994	TBD
More adults/caregivers and community in school building	Strengthen adult volunteers programs.	Principals PCVR Office	Building Staff PCVR Staff	September 1994	NAC
Parents/caregivers involvement at home	Workshop to teach parents on how to help children learn at home and encourage student responsibility. School materials/curriculum sent home to encourage parent participation.	Executive Specialist PCVR Principals	Teachers Support Staff PCVR Staff	September 1994	NAC
Recruit and train parent leaders	Develop strong parent groups, advisory councils and site councils.	Executive Specialist PCVR Principals	Building Staff PCVR Staff	September 1994	NAC

Increased Parent/Community Involvement

Areas of Concern	Actions	Accountability	Responsibility	Timeline	Cost
Learning opportunities for parents and caregivers on district policies and testing	Seminars and workshops.	Teaching and Learning Planning and Support Services	PreK-12 Director Principals Director Testing, Evaluation and Information Services Executive Specialist PCVR PCVR Staff	September 1994	TBD
Learning opportunities for parents/caregivers on family management and parental issues	Seminars and workshops.	Principals Executive Specialist PCVR	PCVR Staff	September 1994	NAC

Improved Climate

Areas of Concern	Actions	Accountability	Responsibility	Timeline	Cost
School Climate	Conduct school climate studies.	Planning and Support Services	Director Testing, Evaluation, and Information Services	Sec. School-Spring 1995 1/2 Elem.-Spring 1996 1/2 Elem.-Spring 1997	$12,000 contract/yr
Participate in "Prejudice Isn't Welcome"	All buildings display/ distribute posters and campaign materials.	Assistant Superintendents	Climate Committees Principals Administrators	September 1994	TBD
	In conjunction with the city-wide campaign, integrate curriculum and student/staff training to eliminate prejudice in our schools.	Assistant Superintendents	All District Staff	September 1995	NAC
Gang Issues/Safety	Evening activities for teens.	Superintendent	Administration and Government Relations	September 1994	TBD
	Community volunteers to aide in halls, cafeteria, lobby area and commons area. Orientation and training.	Principals Executive Specialist PCVR	Building Staff PCVR Staff	September 1994	TBD
Building Staff Development Plans	Must include component on cultural diversity, non-judgmental workshops on respect between staff and student.	Principals	Building Staff Development Committee	September 1994	NAC

Racial Harassment Policy Compliance

Areas of Concern	Actions	Accountability	Responsibility	Timeline	Cost
Implementation of sexual harassment and racial bias/ harassment policies	The Human Rights Specialist will focus his/her time on direct and immediate investigation of staff-staff, staff-student, and student-staff allegations of policy violations.	Planning and Support Services Teaching and Learning	PreK-12 Director Principals Human Rights Specialist	September 1994	NAC
Training and Communication of sexual harassment and racial bias/harassment policies	Ongoing training of principals and administrators about the District's sexual harassment and racial bias/ harassment policies, especially training for new principals and administrators during new principals orientation.	Planning and Support Services Teaching and Learning	PreK-12 Director Human Rights Specialist Staff Development Supervisor	August 1994	NAC
	Principals and administrators will provide training to their staffs.	Teaching and Learning Planning and Support Services	PreK-12 Director Staff Development Supervisor	September 1994	NAC
	Student awareness of sexual harassment and racial bias/harassment issues and policies will be incorporated into the curriculum.	PreK-12 Director Staff Development Supervisor	Principals Teachers	September 1994	NAC
	Current harassment/bias policies will be expanded to address other forms of bias/ harassment such as religious or disability.	Planning and Support Services Teaching and Learning	Human Rights Specialist PreK-12 Director	September 1994	NAC
	Review and revise report forms to insure fairness to both the alleged perpetrator and complainant.	Planning and Support Services Teaching and Learning	Human Rights Specialist PreK-12 Director	September 1994	NAC